

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6362
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 0941

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, TU, CY, US
SUBJECT: THE CLIFFORD MISSION AND TURKISH DOMESTIC POLITICS

REF: (A) ANKARA 0827, (B) ANKARA 0499

1. AS DEPT. AWARE, TURKEY'S FRAGILE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION
HAS LONG BEEN USED AS AN EXCUSE BY THE GOT TO AVOID TAKING DIFFICULT
DECISIONS. THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT UNDOUBTEDLY WILL APPEAL TO
THE CLIFFORD MISSION FOR UNDERSTANDING OF ITS DELICATE
DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION.
UNFORTUNATELY, THIS IS NOT SIMPLY A TACTIC. THE CLIFFORD
MISSION'S VISIT TO ANKARA WILL TAKE PLACE IN A PERIOD OF RISING
DOMESTIC POLITICAL TENSION AND UNCERTAINTY. PRESSURES WITHIN
THE DEMIREL COALITION ARE ALREADY BUILDING WITH THE APPROACH
OF MARCH 1, THE CONSTITUTIONALLY SET DATE FOR THE PASSAGE OF THE
BUDGET, AFTER WHICH A MAJOR CONSTRAINT ON POLITICAL MANEUVERING
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WILL BE LIFTED. PRIOR TO THAT DATE, THE BUDGET APPROVAL PROCESS
ITSELF WILL PRODUCE STRAINS AND TWO POTENTIAL VOTES OF CONFIDENCE,
ONE IN MID-FEBRUARY AND THE OTHER AT THE END OF THE MONTH. IF THE
GROWING DISSENSION WITHIN THE COALITION SHOULD GET OUT OF HAND, THE
GOVERNMENT COULD CONCEIVABLY LOSE ONE OF THESE VOTES. (THE BUDGET
VOTE IS NOT CONSTITUTIONALLY A VOTE OF CONFIENCE; HOWEVER, ON THE
TWO PAST OCCASIONS WHEN A GOVERNMENT LOST A BUDGET

VOTE, IT RESIGNED.)

2. WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED THE SERIOUS DISPUTES BETWEEN THE TWO MAJOR PARTNERS IN THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT, THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP) AND THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP)(REFTELS). THESE DISPUTES PROBABLY REMAIN THE MOST SERIOUS THREAT TO THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE COALITION. HOWEVER, IN RECENT DAYS, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FEYZIOGLU AND HIS REPUBLICAN RELIANCE PARTY (RR) HAVE BECOME THE FOCAL POINT OF TURMOIL WITHIN THE COALITION. FEYZIOGLU CONSIDERS HIS PARTY TO BE THE GUARDIAN OF THE SECULAR TRADITIONS OF ATATURK. HE HAS DURING THE PAST YEAR WATCHED THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF THE ISLAMIC-FUNDAMENTALIST NSP WITH INCREASING UNEASE. HE HAS ALSO BEEN DISTRESSED BY THE MILITANT PAN-TURKISM OF THE FOURTH PARTY OF THE COALITION, THE NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY (NAP) AND BY ITS VIOLENCE-PRONE YOUTH SUPPORTERS. SINCE THESE PHENOMENA ARE NOT NEW, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY FEYZIOGLU HAS CHOSEN THIS MOMENT TO SPEAK OUT. WHATEVER HIS REASON, HE HAS INTRODUCED NEW ELEMENTS OF INSTABILITY INTO THE SITUATION. IN THE PAST WEEK HE HAS PUBLICLY CALLED UPON DEMIREL TO ENFORCE DISCIPLINE UPON THE COALITION, TO INSIST THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE COALITION ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENT PROGRAM. HE SPECIFICALLY CRITICIZED DEMIREL FOR ACCOMMODATING THE DEMANDS OF THE NSP. DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 4, FEYZIOGLU SAID THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT ADHERE TO ITS PROGRAM, HE AND HIS PARTY WOULD WITHDRAW FROM THE COALITION. (THE RR HAS ONLY NINE SEATS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND AT LEAST ONE AND PERHAPS SEVERAL OTHERS MIGHT OPT TO TRANSFER TO THE JP IF FEYZIOGLU SHOULD WITHDRAW. THEREFORE, WITHDRAWAL OF THE RR WOULD PROBABLY NOT BRING ABOUT THE DOWNFALL OF THE GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD CLEARLY WEAKEN IT. FEYZIOGLU ALSO INDICATED THAT

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IF HE WERE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE COALITION, HE WOULD ACT AS THE LOYAL OPPOSITION AND WOULD NOT "BEHAVE IRRESPONSIBLY" AND LEAVE THE COUNTRY WITHOUT A BUDGET.)

3. ANOTHER CONTINUING SOURCE OF FRICTION WITHIN THE COALITION IS THE PROBLEM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. ALL TURKISH POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE SPOKEN OUT ABOUT THE NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS PROBLEM. PRESIDENT KORUTURK HAS BEGUN A SERIES OF MEETINGS ON THE SUBJECT WITH INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL LEADERS. HOWEVER, DESPITE THE GENERAL RECOGNITION OF THE SEVERITY OF THE PROBLEM, THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE INCLINATION AMONG POLITICAL LEADERS TO COOPERATE TO RESOLVE IT. TO DATE, THEY HAVE SEEMED MORE CONCERNED WITH ACCUSING EACH OTHER OF BEING PART OF THE PROBLEM THAN WITH SEEKING MEANS TO RESOLVE IT.

4. THE CONTINUING VIOLENCE HAS RAISED IN MANY MINDS THE SPECTRE OF MILITARY INTERVENTION, BUT UNTIL RECENTLY THAT SPECTRE HAS NOT BEEN BROUGHT OUT INTO THE OPEN. PRESIDENT KORUTURK CAME CLOSE TO DOING SO FEBRUARY 2 WHEN HE SAID--IN A CLEAR REFERENCE TO THE 1969-71

STUDENT VIOLENCE WHICH CULMINATED IN MILITARY INTERVENTION-- "THE EVENTS OF RECENT HISTORY ARE IN THE MINDS OF US ALL." REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) SENATOR BATUR, WHO AS AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF IN 1971 AUTHORED THE MEMORANDUM WHICH FORCED DEMIREL TO RESIGN, UNDERLINED THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE PAST AND PRESENT DURING SENATE BUDGET DEBATES FEBRUARY 5. BATUR SAID THAT IN 1971 A MEMORANDUM HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT AFTER FIVE STUDENTS HAD BEEN KILLED. TO DATE, HE SAID, THE DEATH TOLL HAD REACHED 132 BUT NOTHING HAD BEEN DONE.

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5. IN THIS CONTEXT OF UNEASINESS AND UNCERTAINTY, THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL, A BODY WHICH CONSISTS OF THE PRIMIN, THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND APPROXIMATELY FIFTEEN SENIOR GENERALS, BEGINS A TWO-DAY MEETING IN ANKARA FEBRUARY 7. THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL METS TWICE EACH YEAR TO REVIEW TURKEY'S GENERAL MILITARY POSITION. DURING THIS MEETING IT WILL REPORTEDLY ALSO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED ONE YEAR EXTENSION OF TURKISH GENERAL STAFF CHIEF SANCAR. IT IS ALSO EXPECTED TO REVIEW DOMESTIC SECURITY PROBLEMS--ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT IN ITS CHARTER TO DO SO.

6. ANOTHER POTENTIAL COMPLICATING FACTOR IN THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL

SITUATION IS THE REPORTED ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW POLITICAL PARTY, THE
ORDER PARTY (OP). IT IS RUMORED THAT PERHAPS AS MANY AS TEN
TO TWENTY DISSIDENT NSP DEPUTIES MAY JOIN THE PARTY. THE
DISSIDENT GROUP WHICH REPORTEDLY MAY FORM THE OP HAS MANY GRIEVANCES
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AGAINST NSP LEADER ERBAKAN. AMONG THESE HAS BEEN THEIR OPPOSITION
TO ERBAKAN'S REPORTED WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER COOPERATION WITH
RPP. THEREFORE, EVEN IF THE DISSIDENTS DO FORM A NEW PARTY,
IT IS NOT CERTAIN THEY WOULD ABANDON THE COALITION. IN ANY EVENT,
PARLIMENTARY ARITHMETIC WOULD BECOME MORE
COMPLICATED, AND THE COALITION COULD BECOME EVEN LESS STABLE.

7. COMMENT: EMBASSY WISHES TO BE SURE THE DEPARTMENT
IS UP-TO-DATE ON THE FOREGOING CONCERNS. WHILE THE CLIFFORD
MISSION SHOULD BE FULLY FAMILIAR WITH THEM, WE DO NOT RPT NOT
BELIEVE THEY SHOULD ALTER THE PROPOSED TIMING OF THAT MISSION. THE
INSTABILITIES REFERRED TO ARE, FOR THE PRESENT, ENDEMIC HERE AND
COULD WELL CONTINUE TO BE WITH US FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME.
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